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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)  
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: OBAMA'S INAUGURATION

Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused their January 23 news coverage on the World Health Organization's approval of the island's inclusion in the International Health Regulation; on Taiwan's unemployment rate, which hit a six-year high in December, 2008; and on former President Chen Shui-bian's legal cases. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an op-ed piece in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" discussed U.S. President Barack Obama's inauguration and said the mythology of Obama's life story is actually a reaffirmation of the core values of the United States. An editorial in the pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" urged Obama to set aside "the outdated policies of the past" and say yes to "the right of the Taiwan people to safeguard our democratic independence and human rights. ..." End summary.

A) "Why Are American People Not Afraid?"

Hu Ching-fang, a cultural and social commentator, opined in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 150,000] (1/23):

"... Yet at this moment, the American people need a president like Barack Obama, because the mythology of Obama's life story is in fact a reaffirmation of the core values of the United States. With the U.S. prestige declining and U.S. economy going downhill in the wake of the depressing governance of the [former] Bush administration, the American people can hardly recognize who they are any more. Unlike other nations which reply on a certain ethnic culture as their nation-building foundation, the American people, consisting mainly of immigrants, build their identity on the common values they share, and on the many systems and laws established on such values. As a result, many ideals and values that look like clichs have been repeatedly all the time in different venues and at different time, including in the Hollywood movies and the inaugural speech of Obama. Maintaining such universal values is to maintain the concept of the United States as a nation.

"The American people do not bet on Obama but on themselves. This person of a Kenyan father and a Kansas mother is now being raised up high as the best representative born of the cradle of the U.S. mixed cultures to help the American people to keep their faith. Obama is not a savior, but he is definitely the perfect son of the American spirits. ... One who chooses to believe in himself surely has no fear for the future, even if it is a thorny one. But the question is: Taiwan people, are we afraid of our future?"

B) "Obama, Taiwan and Hope for Change"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] editorialized (1/23):

"The inauguration of Barack Hussein Obama as president of the United States on January 20 and swearing into office of his new Democratic administration launches a new era in American and global politics that begins with promise and hopes as well as doubts of whether the high expectations for the first African American head - of - state of the world's sole superpower will be fulfilled. ... Naturally, while the problems of East Asia are less urgent than the Iraq and

Afghanistan wars, the global and U.S. economic crises and the Israeli attacks on Palestine's Gaza Strip, we hope that Obama and his Democratic administration will soon re-examine the question of peace in the Taiwan Strait and the future of Taiwan's democracy.

...

"Moreover, Obama should realize that Taiwan's hard-won democracy was one the many examples of the sacrifice of American democratic ideals on the altar of the 'war on terror' as the former Bush administration, for the sake of 'security' and 'expediency,' joined with the authoritarian PRC regime in denying the right of Taiwan's elected government to defend or deepen our existing democratic independence, even to the extent of promoting 'regime change' in a democratic ally. We urge the new U.S. president to apply his rejection of the 'false choice' between America's safety and America's ideals by, at a minimum, reaffirming former Democratic president Bill Clinton's declaration of February 24, 2000 that the U.S. will 'make absolutely clear that the issues between Beijing and Taiwan must be resolved peacefully and with the assent of the people of Taiwan' to ensure lasting 'peace and dignity.'

"Moreover, we hope Obama, as leader of the world's leading democracy, should make it clear to both KMT and CCP leaders that 'peace' in the Taiwan Strait must not simply be an one-sided appeasement of a new PRC authoritarian hegemony and must not sacrifice the democratic rights of free choice and the dignity of Taiwan's 23 million people. We urge Obama to set aside 'the outdated policies of the past,' such as Washington's anachronistic 'one China policy,' and boldly say 'Yes, we can' to the right of the Taiwan people to safeguard our democratic independence and human rights and safeguard our opportunity to strive for our dreams of being treated as equals in the international community and fulfilling our duties to the world, including acting as a catalyst for China's democratization."

[Editor's Note: AIT will be closed for the Lunar New Year. Our media products will suspend publication after January 23 and resume on February 2, 2009.]

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